



## **LAKE WORTH LAGOON INITIATIVE (LWLI) HABITAT WORKING GROUP**

### **Meeting Notes – March 24, 2009**

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Mr. Daniel Bates, Environmental Director, Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM).

#### I. Attendance and Introductions

Daniel Bates - ERM; Julie Bishop - ERM; Paul Davis - ERM; Carman Vare - ERM; Alessandra Medri – ERM; Eric Anderson – ERM; Scott Lynch – ERM; Chad Kennedy – FDEP; Terry Brown – Ocean Ridge; Cynthia Plockelman - Audubon Society; Floyd Johnson – Riviera Beach CRA; Dean Monette (illegible) – TBE Group; Jim Bowser – Town of Palm Beach; Don Bergeron – DEP Rec./Pks.; Carlos Vidueira – Rybovich; Justin Hughes – USACE; Garrett Lips – USACE; David Bogordus – FDOT; Amy Farrell – TBE Group; Cassandra Thomas – TBE Group; David Cox – TBE Group; Tom Reinert – FWC/FWRI Tequesta; Erin McDevitt – FWC; Tom Twyford – WPB Fishing Club; Patti Sime – SFWMD; Jocelyn Karazsia – NOAA; Ron Miedema – EPA; Rod Braun – SFWMD; Betty Bingham – Ocean Ridge; John Lamb – City of Lake Worth; Tom Wanke – Surfrider Foundation; Rob Patten - Bird Island Trust

#### II. New Business

LWLI Framework – Discussed SFWMD’s proposed framework to identify objectives and interactions of working group. Habitat WG will assist with identification of goals for framework.  
Request for Additional Membership – Attendees were encouraged to provide input to staff regarding future invitees to the Habitat Group.

#### Habitat Restoration Projects

- There are 29 proposed projects in the LWL Management Plan. Projects to be constructed in 2009: South Cove, John’s Island, Ibis Isles and Boynton/Ocean Ridge Mangroves.
- Scope/design 2009/2010 projects: Currie Park, Bradley Park, Palm Beach Atlantic University, Bingham/Audubon, Town of Palm Beach Mangrove/Oyster, Bryant Park, Lake Worth & Lantana Pocket Parks. The group was encouraged to provide input identifying any additional projects.

Permitting – FDEP was asked about the best way to proceed with applications for proposed oyster/mangrove projects at multiple sites. Mr. Chad Kennedy suggested a pre-application meeting. Point of contact is Ms. Jennifer Smith. After a pre-application meeting is held, FDEP will help in packaging an application in the best way to move forward through the process.

- FDEP/USACE Assistance for Oyster/Mangrove Planter Projects – A meeting will be scheduled with agencies to discuss permitting.
- Mr. Justin Hughes advised that the restoration work could probably be done under Nationwide 27. He would be willing to meet and discuss this issue.

#### Mangrove Planters: HE-2

- ERM’s Priority Sites – listed in Lake Worth Lagoon Management Plan – Appendix C.
- Identify New Sites under Private Ownership; Municipal Assistance
- Backyard Mangrove Program with WPBFC – The concept of the program is to get private property owners along the LWL waterfront to participate in some type of shoreline enhancement (oyster reef, mangroves, spartina grass, etc.). The WPB Fishing Club has partnered with the FWC for technical support. If there were incentive for private property

- owners to support this effort, it would be a tremendous win-win situation. The mangrove trimming variance is a key element.
- Ms. Erin McDevitt stated it is important to move forward with the interested property owners as soon as possible. She believes mangrove planters would be exempted by DEP because they are restoration.
  - Mr. Paul Davis suggested providing homeowner guidelines in an outreach package.
  - **A proposal was made to form a subcommittee to look into private/public initiative. Ms. Julie Bishop will preside over the subcommittee and coordinate with the Outreach Group.**
  - Ms. Jocelyn Karazsia stated that NOAA's restoration center has a living shoreline program. Possibly some of NOAA's outreach materials which target homeowners could be used as a template.

#### **Oyster Reef Projects - HE-1**

- **SFWMD staff was asked to evaluate water quality data relative to salinity range for optimal oyster growth and identification of zone for future oyster reef construction. Ms. Patti Sime suggests evaluating static vs. dynamic habitat by evaluation of hydrodynamic salinity model.**
- Mr. Tom Twyford discussed potential backyard oyster reef projects and the prospect of using local restaurants to try and initiate the purchase of oyster shells. Purchasing a truckload of fossilized shell is much less expensive and more efficient. Although from public awareness and community involvement, setting up programs with local restaurants would be good from an outreach perspective. Suggest creating informational packets that include a statement that property owners can have access to bagged oyster shells. Property owners would be guided in the right direction to have more sustainable and long-term oyster habitat.
- It was noted that limestone rock is cheapest.
- Ms. Sime suggested installing a veneer of fossilized oyster shell over rock.
- Mr. Bates requested suggestions for accessible sites for putting in volunteer oyster habitat: Curry Park, Snook Islands and other options which will be reviewed. Mr. Twyford also suggested Anchorage Park and Lake Park Marina were discussed.

#### **Biological Monitoring Studies** – Mr. Davis gave an overview of current studies.

##### **Ongoing - Physical Monitoring**

- Water quality, sediment sourcing, substrate characterization and C-51 sediment trap.

##### **Biologic Monitoring – LWLMP Action Plans**

Seven parameters were listed regarding work which should be done in terms of biological monitoring: seagrass, oyster, mangrove/spartina, sea turtle, manatee, artificial reefs and fish.

##### **Biological – Future Possibilities**

- FWRI Fisheries – proposal to do independent monitoring – presently on hold until certain have enough funds – also need to determine what other estuaries are doing in terms of evaluating fish.
- Ms. Patti Sime – RECOVER continues SAV and oyster work.
- **A proposal was made to form a subcommittee to look into fisheries and determine how to proceed. Mr. Davis will preside over the subcommittee.**
- Ms. Patti Sime – RECOVER plans to complete substrate map for all estuaries.

**Stimulus Grant Applications** – The County has submitted applications for: Artificial reef projects at multiple LWL sites, South Cove, John's Island and Ibis Island environmental restoration projects.

ICW Dredging - Mr. Bates discussed a recent permit application for a public/private partnership between a couple of the local marinas and Florida Inland Navigation District for ICW dredging. The work should produce approximately 150,000 cubic yards of material which could be put to good beneficial use, such as holes left unfilled throughout the Lagoon that are targeted for either reefs, or to fill and create more mangrove islands (such as Snook Islands).

Florida Inland Navigation District ICW-Maintenance Dredging and Mega-Yachts – Mr. Carlos Vidueira of Rybovich Marina discussed the District partnering with Rybovich Superyacht Marina & Refit, City of Riviera Beach, Port of Palm Beach, Lockheed Martin and the Viking Group to: 1) improve water quality in the LWL; 2) create immediate economic opportunity and jobs; 3) provide redeveloped public access to the waterway; 4) support National defense initiatives; 5) attract foreign investment into the local economy; 6) introduce a new superyacht class to the United States economy; 7) revitalize an important international port; and 8) optimize the Intracoastal Waterway.

Three phases include: 1) Phase I - \$40 million – reconstructed 162 slip public marina; 2) Phase II - \$40 million – retail village with public meeting space, 608 vehicle public garage and office structure; and 3) Phase III - \$400 million – 225 room hotel and conference center, 570 multi-family residential units and public market place.

Mr. Floyd Johnson, Riviera Beach CRA, addressed the group in support of the project.

- National Audubon Society – LWL Bird Count Update – Ms. Cynthia Plockelman gave an update. There are two migration counts per year: 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in May; and 2) 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in September. 22 new species of birds have been identified.

Ms. Plockelman coordinates the spring and fall migration counts for Palm Beach County. She also believes some of the data gaps can be covered by targeting specific points of the LWL that need covering and putting teams out in the field for the Great Backyard bird count over President's Day weekend (a four day period) through National Audubon Society Offices in cooperation with Cornell lab.

### Summary

Formation of two subcommittees and feedback requested prior to next meeting:

- 1) Public/private partnerships for mangrove and oyster reef construction – Julie Bishop.
- 2) Fisheries study – Paul Davis.
- 3) SFWMD review water quality data and suggest zone for optimal oyster reef construction.

### III. Next Meeting - April 28, 2009

#### Topics for Future Agenda

- Public/Private Partnerships Subcommittee – Update
- Fisheries Subcommittee – Update
- Florida Inland Navigation District ICW-Maintenance Dredging and Mega-Yachts – Update
- SFWMD Hydrodynamic Salinity Model - Analysis/Status – Update
- Environmental Trust Fund – Advantages/Disadvantages

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 PM by Mr. Bates.